

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 042336

TOSEC 311

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, PFOR, TU

SUBJECT: DAVIES-ESENBEL DISCUSSION ON OPIUM POPPY BAN

FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO

REF. (A) STATE 039096

(B) STATE 038360

(C) STATE 036458

1. FOLLOWING DISCUSSION OF MAP ASSISTANCE AND E-W PROBLEM WITH TURKISH AMBASSADOR ESENBEL IN HIS CALL ON ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIES MARCH 1 (SEPTTEL), DAVIES TURNED CONVERSATION TO OPIUM POPPY ISSUE. DAVIES SAID HE WANTED TO REPEAT TO ESENBEL BEFORE LATTER LEFT FOR ANKARA WHAT HE HAD SAID AT LUNCH TWO DAYS BEFORE (REF A) -- I.E., THAT INDICATIONS TURKEY MAY BE ABOUT TO MODIFY POPPY BAN GIVE USG CAUSE FOR SERIOUS CONCERN SINCE ANY MODIFICATION WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE REPERCUSSIONS IN THIS COUNTRY WITH PROBABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

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DAVIES WISHED TO URGE AGAIN THAT TWO GOVERNMENTS STAY IN

CLOSE TOUCH ON THIS ISSUE AND THAT GOT TAKE NO IRREVOCABLE DECISIONS UNTIL WE HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS IT IN DEPTH. DAVIES ORALLY GAVE ESENBEL SPECIFIC INDICATIONS OF HARDENING CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES AND GIST OF MESSAGE AMBASSADOR MACOMBER HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO CONVEY TO GOT (REF B).

2. IN RESPONSE ESENBEL SAID IT IS CLEAR TO HIM THAT THEN-PRIME MINISTER ERIM HAD BEEN CONVINCED AT THE TIME THAT HE WAS TAKING A UNILATERAL TURKISH ACTION IN IMPOSING THE BAN AND THAT HE DID NOT NECESSARILY INTEND THAT ACTION TO BE IMMUTABLE AND BINDING ON SUCCESSIVE TURKISH GOVERNMENTS FOR ALL TIME TO COME. INDEED, SAID ESENBEL, FORMER SECRETARY WILLIAM ROGERS, IN HIS PUBLIC REMARKS FOLLOWING TURKEY'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF BAN, INDICATED THAT THIS WAS A GOT DECISION AND THAT THE U.S. WAS GLAD TO ASSIST IN AMELIORATING ECONOMIC EFFECTS FLOWING FROM IT.

3. DURING LENGTHY CONVERSATION WHICH ENSUED ESENBEL EMPHASIZED SEVERAL TIMES, AS HE HAD IN CONVERSATION WITH DAVIES FEBRUARY 22 (REF C), THAT REGARDLESS OF WHETHER U.S. BELIEVES IT HAD OBTAINED A MORAL COMMITMENT FROM GOT ON POPPY BAN, IT IS IMPORTANT TACTICALLY THAT U.S. APPROACH DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE WITH GOT BY ADDRESSING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS INVOLVED RATHER THAN INSISTING ON TURKISH FULFILLMENT OF AN AGREEMENT. HE NOTED THAT DURING LAST OCTOBER'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN IT WAS CLEAR THAT MOST TURKS WISHED FOR SOME CHANGE IN POPPY BAN. FOR U.S. TO ADDRESS PROBLEM ON BASIS OF PRIOR GOT COMMITMENT, WHEN THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT IS INSISTING THAT THERE WAS NO SUCH COMMITMENT OR AGREEMENT BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, WOULD SIMPLY RESULT IN TURKISH PEOPLE'S RALLYING BEHIND THEIR GOVERNMENT AND DEMANDING VOCIFEROUSLY THAT THERE BE AN EARLY POLICY CHANGE REGARDLESS OF CONSEQUENCES FOR U.S.-TURKISH BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. ESENBEL SAID HE THOUGHT TWO GOVERNMENTS SHOULD UNDERTAKE A CAREFUL, PRODUCTIVE DIALOGUE RATHER THAN ADOPT RIGID POSITIONS WHICH WOULD INHIBIT BENEFICIAL EXCHANGE.

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4. DAVIES AND DILLON REPLIED THAT WHILE USG HAS NO DESIRE TO LOCK HORNS WITH GOT ON QUESTION OF WHETHER POPPY BAN DERIVED FROM U.S.-TURKISH AGREEMENT, IT IS NONETHELESS IMPORTANT FOR GOT TO UNDERSTAND THAT U.S. BELIEVES THAT AN UNDERSTANDING WAS IN FACT ARRIVED AT BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS ON THIS ISSUE IN 1971. IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT A SIGNIFICANT

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS BELIEVE THIS. ON OTHER HAND, DAVIES SAID, USG'S PREFERENCE, LIKE THAT OF ESENBEL, WOULD BE TO APPROACH ISSUE FROM ANOTHER DIRECTION. IT IS USG'S DESIRE FOR THOROUGH DISCUSSION OF ISSUES RELATING TO BAN, PARTICULARLY ECONOMIC RAMIFICATIONS, WHICH HAS PROMOTED IT TO ASK GOT TO DISCUSS MATTER IN DEPTH BEFORE TAKING ANY DEFINITIVE POLICY DECISIONS. DAVIES EMPHASIZED U.S. CONCERN THAT IF DIALOGUE IS NOT INITIATED SOON, POLITICIANS AND HIGHER LEVEL BUREAUCRATS IN TURKEY MAY PRODUCE RECOMMENDATIONS EFFECTIVELY LOCKING GOT INTO NEW POLICY DIRECTIONS FROM WHICH IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO MOVE.

5. IN EMPHASIZING U.S. DESIRE TO DISCUSS WITH GOT ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF POPPY BAN, DAVIES UNDERLINED U.S. BELIEF THAT TURKEY IS NOT LOSING LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY WHICH WOULD HAVE ACCRUED FROM SALES OF OPIUM THROUGH LICIT CHANNELS IN ABSENCE OF BAN, BUT, RATHER, THAT MOST OF THE MONEY BEING TALKED ABOUT AS "LOST" TO TURKEY WOULD HAVE FLOWED THROUGH ILLEGAL APPARATUS WHICH IS STILL INTACT IN ISTANBUL. HE SAID THAT ILLICIT TRADE IS A "DIRTY BUSINESS" AND THAT HE ASSUMED GOT WOULD NOT IN EFFECT ASK FOR REIMBURSEMENT FOR ANY OF THAT LOSS. ESENBEL REPLIED HE WAS CERTAIN GOT WOULD NOT.

6. ESENBEL SAID HE HAD NO IDEA WHAT POLICY CONCLUSIONS GOT WOULD COME TO BUT THAT IT SEEMED APPARENT THAT IF STUDY COMMITTEES PRESENTLY EXAMINING POPPY BAN COME UP WITH STRONG ARGUMENT TO EFFECT THAT BAN IS NOT ACCOMPLISHING ITS PURPOSE OR IS WORKING AGAINST INTERESTS OF FARMERS, GOT WILL HAVE NO OPTION BUT TO MODIFY IT. DAVIES SAID THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT BAN HAS BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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SUCCESSFUL IN INTERNATIONAL TERMS. FLOW OF HEROIN TO EUROPE AND U.S. HAS BEEN CUT REMARKABLY. TURKEY HAS RECEIVED ACCLAIM AND APPRECIATION IN U.S. AND INTERNATIONALLY FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION TO EFFORT TO SOLVE ISSUE OF GREAT HUMANITARIAN CONCERN. THUS, NO ONE CAN ARGUE THAT BAN HAS NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE. AS REGARDS EXTENT TO WHICH BAN HAS HURT INTERESTS OF TURKEY'S POPPY FARMERS AND WHETHER THEIR PLIGHT IS REMEDIABLE, IT IS PROBABLY TOO SOON TO KNOW. DAVIES NOTED THAT ONLY 18 MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE BAN WENT INTO EFFECT AND THAT NOT NEARLY ALL MONIES EARMARKED FOR THEIR REHABILITATION HAVE BEEN SPENT.

7. ESENBEL REPEATED HE COULD NOT PREDICT OUTCOME OF COMMITTEES' STUDY IN TURKEY OR WHAT GOT WOULD BE FORCED

TO DO. HE OFFERED PERSONAL OPINION, HOWEVER, THAT IT
WILL BE DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE O CONVINCE TURKISH
PEOPLE THAT TURKEY SHOULD PRODUCE "NOT AN IOTA OF OPIUM"
AT TIME WHEN IT IS PUBLICLY KNOWN THAT THERE IS AN INTER-
NATIONAL SHORTAGE OF RAW MATERIAL NEEDED FOR MEDICINAL
OPIATES AND THAT INDIANS ARE BEING ENCOURAGED TO INCREASE
POPPY PRODUCTION.

8. IN CONCLUSION, DAVIES ASKED ESENBEL TO CONVEY
FOLLOWING TO GOT:

(A) FROM HIGHEST LEVEL AND ON DOWN THROUGH US GOVERNMENT
THERE CONTINUES TO BE EXTREMELY STRONG INTEREST IN
ELIMINATING ILLICIT TRADE IN NARCOTICS.

(B) THERE HAS BEEN GREAT APPRECIATION IN US
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